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April 18, 2006

Mary L. Cottrell, Secretary
Department of Telecommunications & Energy
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
One South Station, Second Floor
Boston, MA 02110

Re: D.T.E. 06-6 – Town of Middlefield

Dear Ms. Cottrell:

Verizon Massachusetts (“Verizon MA”) submits this letter in response to the comments made at the public hearing held on April 3, 2006, in this proceeding.

First, regarding the issue of service outages in Middlefield, during 2005 there had been, on average, approximately 30 network trouble reports per month. Tr. at 7. As John Conroy, Verizon MA Vice President- Regulatory, testified at the public hearing, these trouble reports included not only no dial-tone situations, but also static on the line, *inter alia*. *Id.* at 7-8.

On April 3, 2006, Verizon MA completed an extensive construction project which replaced the main cable feed from its central office (“CO”) in the town of Beckett with a new fiber optic cable. At the public hearing, Mr. Conroy explained that Verizon MA provides telephone service to the town of Middlefield from the Beckett CO via remote terminals. *Id.* at 7. As a result, the \$325,000 fiber optic cable upgrade in Beckett will improve service quality in Middlefield.

The Chairman of the Middlefield Board of Selectman, Thomas Rock, recognized that completion of the fiber-optic cable upgrade appeared to be the “source of the all the frustration” regarding the provision of telephone service in Middlefield. *Id.* at 42-43. Now that Verizon MA has completed the construction project, there is no need for the Department to take further action and this investigation should be closed.

Second, some residents testified that they experienced difficulty in reporting service problems to Verizon MA in connection with another party’s telephone line. *Id.* at

9, 12, 36-37. Verizon MA's practices and procedures clearly permit a third party to report an out-of-service condition on another customer's telephone line. However, Verizon MA's practices require that the customer service representative advise the calling party that related service charges will apply if the Company determines that the out-of-service condition is not caused by a telephone cable failure, but rather by the customer's telephone equipment, which Verizon MA cannot repair. This could lead to reluctance on the part of some customers to complete the trouble report.

Finally, the issue of maintenance and repair of poles in Middlefield was raised at the public hearing. *Id.* at 30-31, 44. Because Middlefield is an electric company "pole set" area, this is the responsibility of Western Massachusetts Electric Company ("WMEC"), not Verizon MA. Verizon MA does, however, coordinate with WMEC to transfer its telephone wires and equipment to effectuate the ongoing removal of double poles in Middlefield.

In conclusion, based on the recent completion of the construction project serving Middlefield, Verizon MA believes that public's concerns regarding alleged service quality issues are resolved. Verizon MA will continue to monitor its trouble reports in Middlefield in the normal course of business. Accordingly, no further action is required and the Department should close this proceeding.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the statements made at the public hearing.

Very truly yours,

/s/Barbara Anne Sousa

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cc: Carol Pieper, Esquire, Hearing Officer (4)
Service List